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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT Monday, March 20, 1939.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "NATIONAL WILDLIFE WEEK". Information from and about the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Today's chat comes at the beginning of a rather special week. March 19th to 25th, inclusive ---- a week that has been designated by the President as "National Wildlife Week". It will be recognized as a time for thinking about the conservation of our wildlife assets, and for working for wildlife protection and preservation. The Bureau of Biological Survey in the U. S. Department of Agriculture is the principal government agency that stands back of wildlife conservation. See Federal agencies that administer lands --- the Forest Service, for one example --- make wildlife conservation an important part of their work, but wildlife conservation is the full-time job of the Biological Survey

If you happen to participate in a community or club program during "National Wildlife Week", you may like to have a little information up your sleeve, as it were, on just what the Bureau of Biological Survey does.

The activities of this bureau are on a vast scale. Field men of the "Survey" cover the country, as newspaper reporters say, from Alaska to Mexico, -- from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic. Some of them administer wild life sanctuaries or refuges. Some collect information on the habits of migratory birds and their "flyways". (That's the name for the routes taken by migratory birds from their breeding grounds in the far north, in Alaska or the Mackenzie Delta.) These birds fly far to the south for the winter, to the Gulf of Mexico or even the coast of South America. On the way they need stopping places or refuges where they can get food, water, and rest in safety.

Other research men in this Department of Agriculture bureau learn which of the various common animals and birds are harmful, which are beneficial. Special men are assigned to control work against predatory wild animals and rodent pests.

The Biological Survey regulates the protection of the waterfowl and game animals in which hunters are interested. But of equal importance are the birds and wild animals that eat obnoxious insects and worms or prey on pests like orchard mice or rats. The wildlife of the forest and uninhabited areas has suffered great losses in recent years, so that certain valuable species have decreased seriously. Causes for this include adverse natural conditions, such as drought, forest fires, destruction of natural cover, and also indiscriminate hunting.

Unwise land use has ruined many wildlife areas that had greater value to man in their natural state than when farmed. The chief emphasis of the Biological Survey at the present time is on the relation between wildlife and better land utilization. That's a keynote for "National Wildlife Week." We are coming to see that unprofitable submarginal land can be used for wildlife restoration, for encouragement of desirable and beneficial species of birds and animals. The government has

purchased a considerable area of such land, and is continuing to acquire other regions and to prepare them to attract useful creatures.

On the economic side better utilization of land for wildlife restoration not only adds to our national wealth in these birds and animals and the services they perform for us. There are about 35 CCC camps at work on the 32 national wildlife refuges, and some NYA and WPA workers are also used. Incidentally the young men in CCC camps under the direction of the Biological Survey are receiving excellent vocational education. They learn automobile mechanics, cabinet making, carpentry, dragline operation and maintenance, surveying, stone masonry, bricklaying, and office filing. Classroom experience is put to immediate use in the camps and some of the CCC enrollees are later employed by the burea.

The eradication of rodent and predatory pests is also of great economic importance to the farmer and rancher. Predatory animals have to be controlled because they are destructive and harmful. They are <u>not</u> among the species that we include under "wildlife restoration". Perhaps the very steak on your dinner table was made safe while it was on the hoof through the watchfulness of a Biological Survey hunter. Coyotes, wolves, mountain lions and other dangerous large wild animals still roam our western wild lands and have to be kept under control.

The fur industry is of growing economic importance because it gives employment to thousands of persons, all the way from the trapper that catches muskrats to the garment worker who sews the lining into a fur coat. "Fur farming", or raising fur-bearing animals in captivity, is an extensive part of the fur industry. The Biological Survey has experimental fur farms where scientists study the habits of foxes, beavers, martens, and other fur animals, and determine the best methods of managing them, the right feeds for them and the prevention of certain diseases foxes and other fur animals are subject to.

The bureau has also a large experimental rabbit farm in California. Rabbits for both meat and fur are raised and studied. The meat of domestic rabbits is excellent, by the way,- sweet, white, and tender. Its flavor and texture are preferred by many to the gamy qualities of wild rabbits. Rabbit fur, as you doubtless know, is widely used for women's coats, under a number of different recognized names, such as "lapin", "sealine", and others. (These must always be identified as rabbit, however, when sold.) Poorer grades of rabbit fur are made into felt for hats.

On the educational side the work of the Bureau of Biological Survey goes hand in hand with nature study. The protection of wild life not only means the continued propagation of rare and valuable species of animals. Nature study in itself stimulates imagination, observation, sympathy, and widens the geographic knowledge of the student. The bureau has contributed many publications giving information on our common species of birds and animals.

And here's one last interesting glimpse of the bureau's work. It's on the control side. Do you have a Zoo in your town? At least a circus comes occasionally. If you see some strange and unusual animals from foreign lands in a Zoo or a circus, you can be sure these strangers had to have the approval of the Biological Survey before they could enter the country. Certain animals, considered dangerous to health or to agriculture, are not permitted to come in under any conditions. The East Indian mongoose is one. Parrots of the species which spread psittacosis are also rigidly excluded.

But we want the beneficial wildlife to increase, and so we're celebrating a "National Wildlife Week" to that end.

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